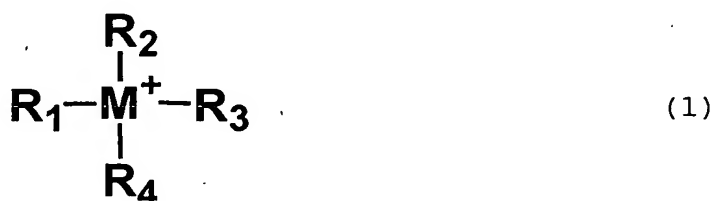


What is claimed is:

1. A layered silicate characterized by being ion-exchanged with an organic onium ion at 50-100% of its ion-exchange capacity, and by having a specific surface area of 2.5-100 m²/g.

2. A layered silicate according to claim 1, characterized in that the organic onium ion is an organic onium ion represented by the following formula (1).



(wherein R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ each independently represent a C1-30 hydrocarbon group or a heteroatom-containing hydrocarbon group, M is a nitrogen or phosphorus atom, and any of R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ may optionally form a ring.)

3. A layered silicate according to claim 2, characterized in that the organic onium ion of above formula (1) is a phosphonium ion wherein M is a phosphorus atom, or M is a nitrogen atom and any of R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ form a ring as a heteroaromatic ion.

4. A process for production of a layered silicate according to any one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the organic onium ion-exchanged layered silicate is freeze dried using a medium with a melting point of at least -20°C and below 100°C.

5. A process for production of a layered silicate according to claim 4, characterized in that the medium with a melting point of at least -20°C and below 100°C is a good dispersing medium for the layered silicate.

6. A resin composition comprising a thermoplastic resin and a layered silicate according to any one of claims 1 to 3, the resin composition being characterized in that the layered

silicate content is 0.01-20 parts by weight as inorganic ash with respect to 100 parts by weight of the thermoplastic resin, and the average number of layers of the layered silicate in the thermoplastic resin is 2-8 layers.

7. A process for production of a resin composition according to claim 6, wherein a single-screw or twin-screw extruder is used for melt kneading of the layered silicate with the thermoplastic resin.

8. A resin composition according to claim 6, wherein the thermoplastic resin is at least one selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyamides, polyimides, polycarbonates, polyphenylenesulfides and polyolefin-based resins.

9. A film comprising a resin composition according to claim 6.